

Federal & State Representatives Assist About 100 Small Business Owners

NILES, IL (November 29, 2011) – Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) hosted a district wide Small Business Event today to provide small business owners, entrepreneurs and startup companies with information on federal and state programs that can help support their business during these difficult economic times.

Representatives from federal and state agencies including the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. General Services Administration, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity presented information on programs to help small businesses succeed in today's economy. Presentation topics included financing for your business, marketing your business to the federal government, funding for companies engaged in research and development, and small business assistance programs for Illinois companies.

The conference also provided business owners with information on how to do business with overseas markets, how to transport products, what fees are associated with exports, what laws apply to them, the federal contracting process as well as assistance for business owners engaged in international trade. After the presentations, business owners were able to ask questions and get answers to their business concerns. Questions ranged from how can small business access capital through the existing SBA programs, to concerns with subcontracting requirements for IT companies.

"I have spent much of the last year engaged in discussion with business owners in the 9th Congressional District about how the government can better encourage hiring and expansion among small businesses,"

said Rep. Schakowsky

. "Small business owners across my district have difficulty securing business loans and many are not aware of the opportunities available for contracting with the federal government. Over 99 percent of American companies are small businesses, and they are the engine that drives this country. In order to get our economy pointed in the right direction, we must equip small business owners with tools to stimulate growth."

Attendees included small business owners, professional services firms, and business association members interested in learning about contracting opportunities with the federal

government and programs to help small business owners access capital.

Sally deVincentis, Chief Executive Officer of APTE Inc., said the event was an “excellent opportunity” to talk to experts in government agencies.

“I got lots of practical information on how to expand my business through government contracts,” said deVincentis.

Bill Branda, Business Development Manager for Workforce Language Services: “I found the event to be very valuable! I learned a lot about programs available to help small businesses. Most importantly, I met with a representative from the GSA that assisted me with understanding the requirements for selling my services to the federal government. That meeting alone was worth the entire time I spent at the event.”

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